

Complaints and Appeals Policy

Policy number	M.3	Version	3.0
Approved by	CEO	Date	25 September 2023
Scheduled review date			September 2024

Purpose

Carringbush Adult Education Inc (Carringbush) is committed to ensuring that its students, program participants, stakeholders and staff have access to a fair, constructive, timely and equitable process for dealing with complaints and appeals.

Definitions

Appeal	An appeal is where a client of an RTO, or other interested party may dispute a decision made by the RTO. The decision made by the RTO may be an assessment decision or may be about any other aspect of the Carringbush's operation
Clients	Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Program participants
Complaint	A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction with an action, product or service of an education and training provider.
Complainant	A person who makes a complaint about a service or product
Staff	Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management • Co-ordinators • Teachers/trainers • Administrative staff
Volunteers	Persons who volunteer their time at Carringbush without formal employment arrangements or payment

Principles

Carringbush is committed to:

- ensuring clients have the best opportunity to engage and achieve their learning goals
- Providing an environment that is welcoming to members of the community who access its services
- Encouraging clients and stakeholders to submit a complaint or appeal in a fair, constructive, timely and equitable process.

Carringbush appreciates the process of making a complaint can make a person feel anxious and worried. To help reduce that anxiety Carringbush will ensure there is a clear, fair, transparent and timely process to follow that encourages its clients to speak up if they feel something is not right.

Policy

Students and program participants

Information about the Complaints and Appeals Procedure will be made available prior enrolment and be readily available for all clients and staff. Clients will be informed that in the event it is not able to resolve the complaint or appeal the student can take their complaint or appeal to Carringbush's registering body the VRQA.

At all times the emphasis shall be on trying to achieve a positive resolution acceptable to all parties involved.

Staff of Carringbush will afford all reasonable assistance to the complainant.

The process for dealing with complaints will be at no cost to the complainant and will not affect their enrolment or participation.

Details of the complaint will be kept strictly confidential and the privacy of the parties involved will be protected.

To provide an accurate record and to ensure transparency each procedural step taken by all parties involved in the Complaints Resolution Procedure must be recorded in writing. Clients may elect to bring an advocate to any of the meetings outlined within the Complaints Resolution Procedure. Copies of all documents relating to this matter shall be made available to the client who is making the complaint.

The five key aspects of Carringbush's complaints process are set out below:



Complaint Procedure

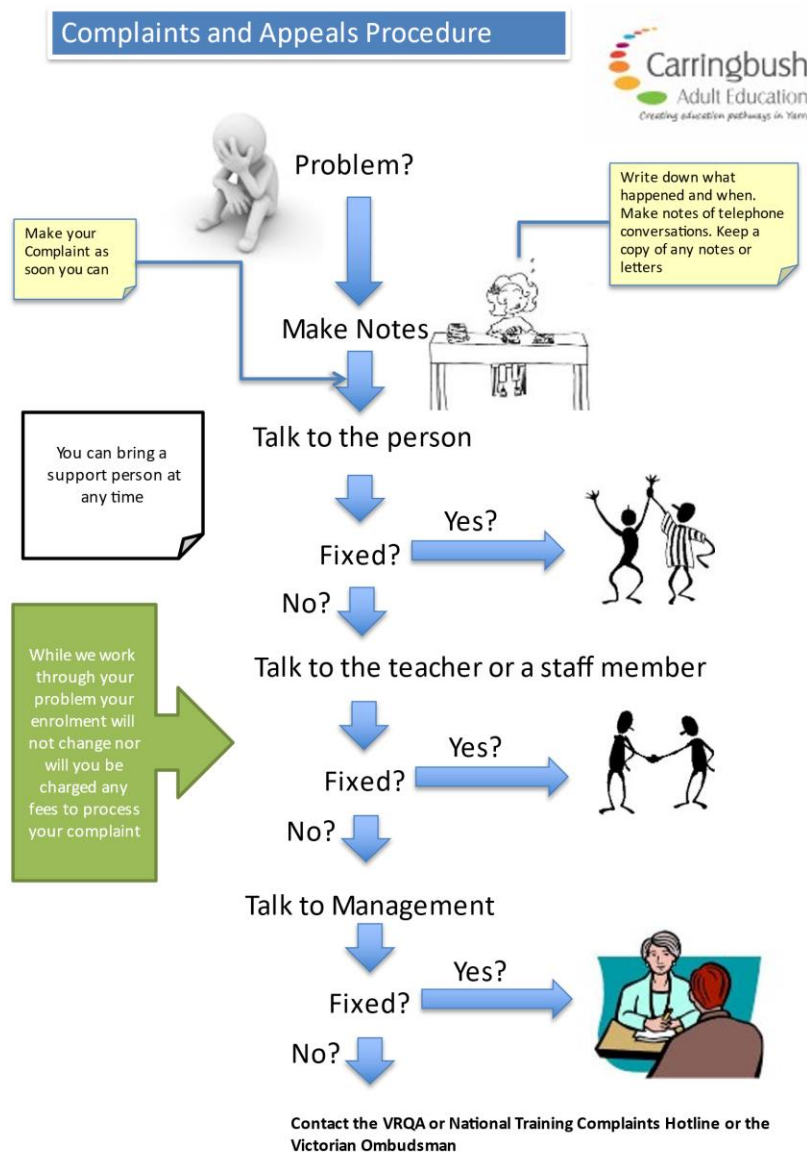
Aims

This procedure aims to determine if a complaint is justified, to ensure that the complainant is given every chance to voice their complaint and to try and reach a solution acceptable to all parties. This procedure is structured to ensure that the complainant is not threatened by and can be confident in the procedures. Emphasis shall always be on resolving the issue to the satisfaction of all parties involved. To make sure the process is fair all steps shall be recorded in writing. Complainants will be given a copy of all documentation relating to each step of the process.

Carringbush will endeavour to ensure that all of its classes and services are delivered in a professional manner however, it is also recognised that sometimes things do not go the way they were intended. If you are not happy with some part of our service please follow the steps below.

Resolving Complaints

The following poster is displayed at all Carringbush locations as well as on the website and on the I-pads:



The first point of contact for any complaint is a Carringbush staff member. For students this will be their teacher. Every effort should be made at this point to resolve the cause of complaint.

If the complainant is not satisfied with this discussion, the complainant should be referred to the Education Manager.

The Education Manager will hear the complaint and through negotiation, make a decision. This decision will be recorded in writing. This record will be held in the Carringbush Complaints Register.

If the matter has not been resolved the complaint is to be recorded as a “Formal Complaint”.

Appeal

If the complainant would like to dispute a decision made (including an assessment decision), the complainant should first speak with the person who made the decision. All appeals must be reported to the Education Manager.

Formal Complaint or Appeal

The following procedures are to be followed. A formal complaint can only proceed if the previous steps have been followed and have not resolved the issue.

1. The complaint is to be made in writing using the Complaints and Appeals Form.
2. A panel comprising of:
 - A member of the Carringbush Management Team.
 - A member of the Carringbush teaching staff .
 - An independent representative with expertise deemed applicable to the issue.

This group will be referred to as the Complaints Committee.

3. The Complaints Committee will meet with the complainant. The proceeding will be fully documented in writing.

The initial cause for complaint will be recorded in the Carringbush Continuous Improvement Register. Any recommendations arising will be incorporated into all Carringbush official documents.

In the event that a successful resolution cannot be made through negotiation between the complainant and the Complaints Committee, the complainant will be informed in writing that the issue is now regarded by Carringbush as ‘in dispute’. All Carringbush staff will be obliged not to enter into discussions with the complainant.

Carringbush will determine if an independent mediator is to be engaged and the complainant will be advised of this in writing.

The complainant will also be advised of the following agencies who can assist them:

- the National Training Complaints Hotline on 133873
- the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) via its website at:
<https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/complaints/Pages/complaints.aspx?Redirect=1>

For complaints non-course related, complainants can contact the Victorian Ombudsman via the website at: <https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/>

If the complainant is a student, they will be informed that the matter, including all documentation held, will be referred to the peak body that has appropriate jurisdiction including the VRQA or Funding Source organisations if requested.

All formal complaints must be lodged using the Complaints and Appeals form.

References

VET Funding Contract	Clause 4.9
VRQA Guidelines	Clause 2.7
AQTF	Standard 2.7